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Security Council

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Letter dated 13 October 2015 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

In my letter to the President of the Security Council dated 20 May 2015 (S/2015/385), I conveyed my intention to organize a ceremony to award the Captain Mbaye Diagne Medal for Exceptional Courage on the occasion of the Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping in September 2015. I wish to bring to the attention of the Council recent developments regarding the Medal.

In response to my request for nominations for the Medal, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations received eight nominations from four field missions. A Board comprising representatives from the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations, Political Affairs and Field Support and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights subsequently reviewed the eight nominations to assess whether the acts of courage described therein met the high standards of courage displayed by Captain Diagne, as set out in my letter to the President of the Security Council dated 16 December 2014 (S/2014/946). These require that the recipient of the Medal demonstrate exceptional courage by going above and beyond the call of duty while putting his or her own life at risk in an effort to save and protect the lives of others. Solid corroborating evidence in the form of witness statements, along with other substantiating and supporting documents, is also required.

The assessment process highlighted the courage demonstrated by uniformed and civilian personnel serving in United Nations peace operations in the performance of their daily duties. However, the Board concluded that none of the acts of the eight candidates met the very high standards required for the Captain Diagne Medal. Specifically, while a number of the candidates demonstrated considerable bravery in defending the lives of others, their actions remained in line with expected performance. Moreover, in some cases, no corroborating evidence was available.

I therefore wish to inform the Security Council that I have decided not to organize a ceremony to award the Medal in the margins of the General Assembly but instead to hold an event with the Diagne family later in 2015 to recognize the extraordinary courage of Captain Diagne and his acts of bravery as a United Nations peacekeeper.

I will continue to stress the importance of the Medal to the heads of the United Nations field missions, asking that they prioritize the identification of eligible candidates for the Medal in the coming years.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

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